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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the potential for teacher education institutions to implement a "reflection in and on action" strategy in their training programs. A central argument is that the academic context of teacher education and the "reflection" approach can support a professionalism of teachers. However, a necessary precondition is that teacher education establish fruitful co-operation with local communities and their schools. Introductory sections look at educational trends in many countries, government role, and teacher professionalization. Section 2 examines the literature on the current trend toward professionalism through reflection. Section 3 describes Swedish teacher education as an example of the implementation of this strategy. This section covers the progressive decentralization of comprehensive schools, the tradition of teacher educators as advocates for better schools, an integrated program with a diversified curriculum and staff, traditional notions of teachers' professionalization, new research-based notions of professionalization, research as a bridge between the two traditions, the agents that will shape and define professionalism, and a summary of the Swedish model. Section 4 argues that dynamic teacher education is a source for professionalism and an indirect tool for state steering. (Contains 46 references.) (JB)

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Berit Askling & Edgar Almén

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Teacher Education

A revised version of a paper, Teacher education: A tool for state steering and/or a resource for developing a professionalism, presented by Berit Askling and Edgar Almén at the SRHE annual conference Government and the Higher Education Curriculum — Evolving Partnership in December 14—16, 1993 in Brighton, England.

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Abstract

Askling, Berit and Almén, Edgar (1994): Governing schools and developing professionalism i Complementary or contradictory tasks in teacher aducation. Lärarutbildningens lilla serie nr 5.

Nowadays, in many countries, there is a growing concern about the professionalism of teachers and also about teacher education. In many teacher education programmes, the idea of "reflection in and on action" is adopted in order to meet new demands on an inquiry oriented and research based preparation for teacher professionalism.

Such an approach raises the political question about how much "freedom" governments are willing to give teacher education, and how much of "professional autonomy" governments are ready to accept among teachers in schools.

In this article, the potential for teacher education to implement a "reflection in and on action" strategy in the training programmes is scrutinized.

It is argued that the academic context of teacher education and the "reflection" approach can support a professionalism of teachers. However, a necessary precondition is that teacher education can establish fruitful co-operation with the local communities and their schools.

I INTRODUCTION

I.1 Government - professional education¹ - professionalism

Nowadays, in many countries, teacher education has moved into the higher education systems but is still subjected to firmer governmental regulations than many other professional training programmes. The responsibility for providing the school system with a sufficient number of teachers is often claimed as one reason for firmer governmental regulations, the political ambitions to use schooling as tool for implementing long-term policies is considered another reason.

There is also nowadays in many countries a growing concern about the professionalism of teachers². Their professionalism is challenged for promoting a desired improvements in schools or in order to meet criticism on schools and teachers. In some countries teachers' professionalism is challenged by governments, in other countries by faculties of education, or by teacher unions. One important way of preparing for a professionalism, it is often claimed in the debates, is to raise the standard of teacher education³.

Today, irrespective of the national contexts of teacher education and of teachers work, one particular "solution" seems to be internationally trusted as an effective strategy for improving teacher education and for supporting a professionalism: More time in the training programmes - as well as in inservice training programmes - ought to be used for a thorough "reflection in and on action"⁴ in line with what is now implemented in many medical education programmes, in law education programmes etc.

This "reflection" strategy holds, it is often argued for with regard to teacher education, the potential for creating a more "higher education" or "academic" approach of the programme - and thus

¹ In this article we use the concept "professional education" for vocationally oriented post secondary training programme of at least about 3 years length, such as medical education, nurse education, teacher education

² The work of the Holmes Group in the US is one example, the recent - not yet published OECD study on Teacher Quality gives many examples from the OECD countries of this trend.

³ Another way has recently been proposed in Great Britain: the closing of teacher education institutions and the reliance on a school based teacher training.

⁴ Following the arguments from, among others, Donald Schon (1983).

also to adjust the programme to its new higher education context - without denying the importance of the practical on the job training. By coached reflection in and on action the traditional transmission of methodological rules and theoretical generalizations could be replaced by a reliance on reflection for developing personal constructions of professional knowledge. In addition, such coached reflection, could bridge the organizational and epistemological gap between theoretical studies and practical training.

I. 2 State steering versus academic freedom and professional autonomy

However, this more "academic" approach of teacher education raises the very delicate political question about how much "freedom" governments are willing to give teacher education compared to other higher education programmes, and how much "professional autonomy" governments are ready to accept among teachers in schools.

With reference to the "freedom" aspect, two principally different kinds of relationship between government and higher education can be identified, when examining national higher education systems:

- a) Government expects higher education to be an important resource for society and culture by relying on the autonomy of higher education institutions and academic freedom. This is the "classic" relationship between government and universities.
- b) Government uses higher education as a tool for expected development and changes in society. This is the so called "social engineering" way of treating universities and other higher education institutions.

From time to time and to a varying degree in different countries over time, the first or the second kind of relationship predominates. Generally speaking, in Britain there is a long tradition of academic freedom, while on the Continent, more often, higher education has been regulated in accordance with existing or expected demands in society, on the labour market etc.

Irrespective of time and nations, there is a parallel dualism within professional education (Siegrist 1994): while some professional training programmes have an unquestioned residence in universities and prepare for respected professions with a great amount of social prestige and professional autonomy, other programmes are treated as state steering instruments (with a normative function on behalf of the government), aiming at reinforcing a desired and expected development in the corresponding professional field. The term "semi-professionalism" is sometimes used, the "semi" indicating a lack of autonomy of the professionals.

This dualism can be illustrated by comparing such educational enterprises as law education (Kennedy 1987) on the one hand and social work education (Henkel 1994) on the other hand. Although nowadays often integrated into the higher education systems, the non-academic heritage is still evident in many programmes preparing for work in the social and educational sectors and they are still more open to government interventions. In many countries the social engineering tradition is still evident in the relationship between government and teacher education.

The reflection strategy as a fruitful way for promoting a "professionalism" also gives rise to questions, when implemented in teacher education. Reflection, based on theories and on personal practical experiences and implemented in an academic context, might give room for new perspectives and aspects of professionalism in a way that is unfamiliar not only to teacher education but also unfamiliar to - and unexpected by - the government. It can bring into teacher education notions of teacher professionalism that might be unforeseen and uncontrolled in the training programmes and for the government and, besides, quite contradictory to the normative social engineering tradition.

It what respect, then, is teacher education expected to gain from its new higher education context and what kind of professionalism is actually expected - and could be accepted - by governments?

1.3 The purpose of this article

The purpose of the article is to discuss the potential for teacher education to deal with the dualism between academic freedom

and state steering, mentioned in the previous section, when trying to implement a "reflection in and on action" strategy in the training programme and- at least in theory - giving room for a more independent and autonomous teacher professionalism to be developed.

We will review recent literature with regard to current notions of teacher professionalism (and the purposes behind the introduction of this notion) and the current interest in the reflection strategy and then use Swedish teacher education as a "case" for examining in what context this strategy is to be implemented.

I. 4 Swedish teacher education:

Nowadays in Sweden, the government frequently uses such concepts as "decentralization", "higher education context", "school development" and "professionalism", implicitly expressing significant expectations and obligations on teacher education. In doing so, the government implicitly brings the dualism between academic freedom and social engineering to the fore.

In short, since the 70s,

- in successive steps decentralization is implemented in the Swedish *comprehensive school* system and the governing power is to a great extent handed over from the state to the municipalities, to the school units and to the professionals (the teachers).

- there also is a gradual decentralization of decision making in *higher education*. Today, state regulations are reduced and the institutional independence and the academic freedom are challenged. Quality and efficiency are expected to be improved (without extra state funding) by exposing the institutions to marketing forces and consumers choices (Askling 1993).

- all programmes of *teacher education* are incorporated into the higher education system and state steering and interventions in teacher education have been gradually reduced. Anyhow, the very structure of the programme, and the aging staff, the so far still weak research base, make these programmes, informally, more framed than many other higher education programmes.

In recent governmental proposals (in the beginning of the 90s) and in decisions taken by the Swedish Parliament, references are made to the professionals in schools. The professionalism of teachers is expected to guarantee a high quality in schooling, and teacher education is still expected to function as a state steering instrument for keeping a national standard in this decentralised school system. The new academic context is apparently considered by the government a guarantee for a high and a uniform professional standard among teachers.

The multi-dimensional dualism, identified in the introductory paragraphs, is not treated as problematic or contradictory in the Governmental propositions and decisions. On the contrary, from the point of view of the Government, there seems to be a harmonious relation between decentralization, academic freedom, professionalism and nationally equal standards.

II PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH REFLECTION: a current trend

II. 1 The notion of professionalism

The concept "professionalism" is nowadays a frequent word, causing a lot of enthusiasm but also a lot of confusion as one and the same word is used in a variety of contexts and for different purposes: in political discussions, as a research topic, as a goal in teacher education, as a claim for occupational prestige etc.

There is also often a certain overlap in the use of the related - but not similar - concepts profession, professionalism, professionalization and de-professionalization. In short, the concept profession focuses on characteristics in the occupation, professionalism refers to the expertise of those who are practising in an occupation, professionalization and de-professionalization refer to changes in status and prestige (and thus also in power) of the professionals. Sometimes professionalization is claimed by the professionals themselves, in other cases by governments (Siegrist 1994). In the definition of profession presented by Goodlad (1984), the control of knowledge is at the heart of the concept and, as knowledge presents a form of power, professions are political phenomena. According to Hoyle the term profession can be used

descriptively and prescriptively (Hoyle 1982). Hoyle also makes a distinction between professionalization (referring to an increase in professional competence or status of a group) and professional development (the individual process of improving professional competence).

Much attention has been paid to "teacher professionalism". Can teachers be regarded as professionals? Does their work reflect a professionalism? Several criteria for professionalism have been set up, such as a shared but exclusive knowledge base, authority (legitimation), autonomy a collective independence), ethical rules and professional language⁵, all such criteria reflecting different theoretical frameworks for defining professionalism (Taylor 1994).

In recent research on teachers' work and professionalism three distinct, and somewhat contradictory, orientations can be identified: In the first one, the struggle for a greater professionalism is emphasized. Teachers are considered having a voice, being experts and having a particular kind of professional knowledge. Such an extended professionalism is supported by researchers who want to bring to the fore the complexity of the occupation, of schooling and of teaching (Fullan and Hargreaves 1992). In the second one, the de-professionalization of teachers' work is in focus. It is claimed that teachers have been expected to respond to increasingly heavier demands without being able to manage their own working conditions. Current references to their professionalism, made by politicians, it is argued, are tricks to get them to collaborate willingly (Apple 1986, Popkewitz 1991).

According to Lundgren, teachers in many European schools were about to develop a professional autonomy at the beginning of this century, but this movement came to an end during the extensive expansions and reforms of the school systems in the 50s. Shortage of teachers were in many countries met by appointments of teachers without training and certification. The increase in complexity of the school systems also paved the way for politicians and school administrators to take over the agenda in the public debate. The teachers lost their voices and also in status and prestige, which became evident both in the recruitment of teachers and the status of teacher education. (Lundgren 1987).

⁵ With regard to Swedish teachers, this aspect of professionalism is studied by Colnerud and Granström (1993)

In research on professionals, a third - sociological - orientation is also apparent, focusing on how professionals use closure strategies for consolidating their status or knowledge monopoly (Burrage and Torstendahl 1990, Torstendahl and Burrage 1990). This orientation is, however, not at all evident in research on the teaching profession.

This focusing on the professionalism of teachers and other groups, mainly in the public sector, nowadays seems to be a typical phenomenon in Western countries. In nations with long traditions of centralist state steering, the profession is considered a part of the school ideology and the curriculum and, so far, not made a topic in itself by educational researchers, as can be seen in East European educational research (Darvas 1993).

Thus, apparently the growing interest in the professionalism of teachers reflects important changes in the power structure of the relation between the state (or the Public) and the teachers. Professionalism is claimed for in many Western countries - but obviously for quite different purposes. It is claimed for when the state wants to get rid of some of its own obligations and responsibilities by an extensive decentralization. The professionalism is also claimed for when the competence of teachers is under attack and when teachers (with a support from allied researchers) want to protect themselves against criticism.

II. 2 Reflection in and on action - responses from professional education

In the literature on professional education and professionalism, the notions of "reflection in and on action" has been considered a promising way for promoting a more profound preparation for professionalism and for overcoming identified shortcomings in professional education (Schon 1983, 1987). In Schon's work there is a strong belief in the individual as an agent for change, given the opportunities to reflect on his/her practice. This trust in reflection as a promising way for reinforcing professional development is also evident in an ongoing OECD - study on Teacher Quality⁶.

According to Kennedy (1989a), when contrasted to the traditional professional competence model, the reflective practitioner model

⁶ OECD/CERI Teacher Education Quality Study.

offers a much more demanding standard for good professional performance. There are wide variations in how, and how well, people can reflect on their practices.

In several papers and articles Kennedy has brought to the fore the variety of assumptions behind professional education (1987, 1989a, 1989b, 1992). She identifies two dominating intellectual traditions, one concentrating on content coverage and one concentrating on the profession's problem solving processes. According to the first one, the students must get knowledge of typical "model" situation and how to handle these situations. According to the second one students have to be prepared to think on their feet by giving them skills and strategies for analysing and interpreting unforeseen situations. In professional education, the one or the other of these traditions has dominated. This dualism reflects the history of professional education and the recent movement from training schools to a higher education context (a development that in many countries is evident with regard to teacher education according to the earlier mentioned OECD review): their reason for being is based on the utility of their programme, but their reason for being in a university is based on the intellectual rigor of their programme. Professional educators have to balance between this new standard of intellectual rigor and the traditional standard of utility.

Smyth (1992) takes a very critical standpoint when examining the current interest in the politics of reflection. According to Smyth, the interest is perhaps not always altruistic. On the contrary, reflection is claimed for when there are signals of increased central control of the professionals. In addition, far from being emancipatory, teachers can be entrapped within the New Right ideology of radical interventionism and the free market by these demands for reflection. On the surface the state control mechanisms are reduced when schools, parents and local communities and teachers are allowed to engage in participative locally based approaches and where reflection is underscored. But what freedom is there, asks Smyth, for actively contesting, debating and determining the goals?

It is also argued that the term "reflection" is one among many so called slogans, eagerly adopted for hiding contradictions and disagreements among educators in teacher education (Noffke and Brennan 1988).

A main theme in the literature on teacher education is the conflicting knowledge bases. With a point of departure taken in her earlier mentioned identification of two dominant intellectual traditions in professional education, Kennedy claims that teacher education, however eager to adopt the reflection concept, lacks the cultural support that this concept enjoys in such professional education programmes as law and in architecture. The culture of teaching does not value individually recognizable performance and competition among professionals in the way law and architecture do.

Another theme in the literature on teacher education is the conflicting purposes of teacher education: to maintain and reproduce the traditional patterns of values, thinking and organizing schooling, and to promote innovations and reforms (Lanier and Little 1986, Popkewitz 1991). Educators lack strong cultural norms regarding what counts in their fields. This ambivalence stimulates endless debates about the nature of the professional task and a tendency to overtly abstract and idealised characterisations of the work.

Contradictions in teacher education form the main issue in a critical analysis by Ginsburg of the current state of teacher education. Contradictory ideologies and social relations exert influence on people involved in the construction of teacher education (Ginsburg 1988).

After having examined several attempts to introduce a more reflective approach in US teacher education, Munby and Russel declare a fairly pessimistic standpoint. The complexity of teacher education and the variety of underlying assumptions and interpretations of the notion of reflection make them ask if reflective teacher education is just turned into a technique or if it can be treated as an issue of epistemology (Munby and Russel 1993).

Apparently, there is enthusiasm as well as disillusion when researchers and teacher educators are assessing the potential for teacher education to use the formal academic freedom for 1) implementing a thorough - critical - reflection in and on action among teacher students, and 2) for creating a professionalism of teaching and a professional autonomy for teachers.

III. The Swedish case: A DECENTRALIZATION TO THE PROFESSIONALS IN THE SCHOOLS

III.1 A step by step decentralization in comprehensive school⁷

In the 70s, in Sweden, the centralist rational planning ideology - the predominating reform strategy in the creation of the welfare society during the 50s and 60s - was criticized and questioned as a governmental principle for the public sector in general and for the educational system in particular. Since then, the belief in centralism and the trust in rational planning have been gradually replaced by decentralization movements in which the centre (the State, the government, the national agency) is giving up more and more of its former power (Askling and Almén 1993)⁸.

In comprehensive schools, the decentralization movement was made evident in the expectations of local school development. Teachers were encouraged to take part in local school development activities. They got scheduled time for collaboration in so called working units⁹ and a fairly liberal support for collective school development activities.

At the end of the 80s, this support had to be restricted. A main reason was the bad economy of the state and the municipalities. In governmental proposals further steps towards decentralization were proposed by the Socialist party and a more pronounced local responsibility for schools was expected from the municipals¹⁰. It was underlined in the proposal that the main resource for development must be looked for in the classrooms and in the individual school. The experiences and the *professionalism* of teachers and principals must be used. Here we find - for the first time - governmental references to the professionalism of teachers as a main resource for school development.

At the very beginning of the 90s, actually *before* the shift in government, the system for resource allocation to the schools was changed considerably. The former ear-marked state grants for

⁷ This is described in Askling and Jedeskog (1993).

⁸ The opposite trend is nowadays apparent in many decentralised systems, such as in the US and UK.

⁹ Established in every school for groups of teachers.

¹⁰ Governmental proposal 1990/91: 18.

such activities as school development and in-service training were abolished.

Now (1994) the Conservatives have taken further steps towards decentralization, they too referring to the professionals and the professionalism in schools. The aim is to increase the freedom of choice for individuals and freedom for institutions and to strengthen the quality of education in an international context¹¹. It is also expected to create competition between schools and thus promote quality. The slogan by the Minister of Education: "Swedish schools are to be the best schools in Europe" points out his concern for excellent assessment outcomes in international evaluations¹². A local freedom is proclaimed. The schools are encouraged to lay down a policy of their own and to give their schoolwork a local profile, the teachers to rely on their professionalism and the parents to make their own choice of school¹³. Equality of opportunities is nowadays replaced by equity in competition. There are no longer any regional state authorities taking part in the allocation of resources to in-service training (except for a small part that is compulsory) and to development work. State grants to the whole sector of social services, including education, are put into one basket and turned over to the municipals without any allocation rules. This means, that the municipals got an extensive influence by getting the economic "power" over the schools.

In the municipalities, there is now a wide variation in how the schools are organized. In some of them, there are no longer separate school boards. The schools are administered as just one kind of institutions among other kinds in a system of social services. The school politicians and school administrators have to compete with other social services boards and institutions for resources to such activities as in-service training and development work.

From an organizational point of view, teacher professionalism is less "protected" than was the case for teachers in the 60s and 70s.

¹¹ Ministry of Education (1992): *The Swedish Way towards a Learning Society*. Stockholm.

¹² Many Swedish educational researchers claimed that Sweden in many respects already has the best schools in Europe.

¹³ However, an OECD review team, invited by the Conservative government in 1991 commented this in the following way: "Decentralization of authority and innovation in organization and governance do not in themselves lead automatically to innovations in teaching and learning" (page 23), thus indicating a doubtfulness to the market oriented decentralization policy. The Swedish Ministry of Education (1992), Stockholm.

At that time prescriptions and regulations restricted but also shielded the teachers. Now teachers are more open to a variety of market forces (the economy of the municipalities and the interests from the parents). Now they are expected to refer to their professionalism when claiming for resources, when setting their own goals, when giving their school a local profile etc. In accordance with the idea of strengthening the power of the municipalities, teachers are now the employees of the municipalities - and not of the state. Class-teachers' union accepted the decision, while the subject teachers (teaching in grades 7-9 in comprehensive schools and in upper secondary schools) resisted the proposal so heavily that they went on a national strike.

The Conservatives have been eager supporters of the idea of decentralization, but are now apparently taking some steps backwards towards centralism with regard to curriculum steering. They are elaborating national course plans and national criteria for marks - in addition to national evaluations and central tests.

The decentralization policy was introduced in times of financial strength and an expansion of the public sector. This expansion could not be handled efficiently within a rational planning strategy. In order to allow for creativity and flexibility in planning and problem-solving, decisions have to be taken on the local levels. The policy also fits well into the general policy of the 60s and 70s for democracy and participation (Askling and Almén 1993). This movement away from central governance was - and still is - argued for in positive terms, as an increase in democracy and as a precondition for a necessary flexibility and innovation capacity. However, in moving from central governance to a more local one, the issue of responsibility is brought to the fore. Irrespective of motives, decentralization in an educational system puts into focus the balance between political and professional power (Lundgren 1990). It thus also brings to the fore the question of what is expected by these professionals.

At the end of the 80s, there was no "political space" for further expansion of the public sector and for further increase in state funding of public services. The state turned over more and more of its former financial obligations for education, social service, health care etc. to the municipalities. As a consequence, the state also had to reduce its prescriptions and regulations and give room for

the local communities to decide on their own money. The state could no longer "buy" the implementation of its own policy.

Therefore, in order to "protect" educational standards in comprehensive schools, the state has to rely on the teachers' professionalism as a guarantee for national standards.

III. 2 The tradition of teacher education as a spokesman for a better school

There is a long tradition in Sweden of close relationship between the State, teacher education and the schools. This statement holds for the university-based subject teacher education as well as for the seminar teacher education, although it is most evident for the last one. As a matter of fact, the entire university structure in Sweden can be traced back to the main task of the universities to prepare the students for positions as state officials in Church, in Justice, in grammar schools and at the universities themselves.

Since the very beginning of teacher education for *compulsory school* teaching, in the middle of last century, the written national curriculum¹⁴ is considered the formal guidebook for the corresponding training programme with regard to the relative weight and content of subject studies. At that time, the training in methods was closely linked to these subject studies. Points of references for the curriculum were, according to Lundgren (1979), God, King and Country. Gradually, this "code" was changed and such subjects as psychology and educational theory were introduced in the training programmes. However, the main characteristics of teacher education remained intact till the middle of this century: seminars located in cathedral towns (some of them were also university towns) and with a close relation to the Church and to the State.

The teacher education for *grammar school* teaching was entirely academic in content and located just to the universities. After a degree in Liberal Art or Sciences (consisting of in-depth studies in at least two subjects in combinations corresponding to teacher specialization in grammar schools) followed one year of supervised training in a grammar school. In the 60s, this practical year was replaced by one year of pedagogical/methodological studies

¹⁴ Laid down by the Parliament.

at university interchanged with periods of practical training. This structure is still kept for the training of subject teachers in the upper secondary schools.

In the 50s, the *normative* function of teacher education (in particular teacher education for compulsory schools) as a tool for ideological changes in schools was pronounced. At that time the non-streamed comprehensive school (grades 1-9) was to be implemented. Teacher education was expected to support a desired development in comprehensive schools which in its turn was considered a tool for supporting a better society. Teacher education - and especially the programme for teaching in grades 1-6 - got the role of spokesman and creator of teachers for this new school.

The point of reference for teacher education - and in particular the programme for grades 1-6 teachers - was the political vision of tomorrow's school. Teachers were to be prepared for working in schools in accordance with a progressive school ideology and they were guided by the national written curriculum in their selection of content and teaching methods. Subject teacher training was not affected by these ideologically normative expectations to the same extent as was the programme for teachers in grades 1-6. The university base prevented the state from "intervening" in the academic disciplines, but of course there was a normative message during the year of pedagogical/methodological and practical training.

In 1988, a new programme for teachers in comprehensive schools was implemented, replacing the former programmes for grades 1-6 and partly replacing the subject teacher training¹⁵. The programme consists of three distinct parts which are interchanged in all terms: subject (content) studies, pedagogic, including educational theory and methodology, and teaching practice. The new programme has two alternatives: one preparing for teaching in grades 1-7, the other one preparing for teaching in grades 4-9. The former one is located to universities and teacher colleges - now parts of the regional colleges - and the latter one just to the universities. Thus, two distinct teacher education traditions were brought into one programme¹⁶: the seminar (craft) tradition and

¹⁵ The traditional subject teacher education is kept for teaching in subjects in upper secondary school.

¹⁶ Within this uniform framework the programme offers a series of specialisations, orientations and alternatives.

the academic tradition. With regard to state relations, two different roles were also brought into the same programme: one representing the normative spokesman ship mentioned above and the other one representing the traditional academic freedom.

The main purpose for establishing this programme was to use teacher education as a tool for taking a further step towards realising the basic principles - organizational as well as ideological - for the non-streamed comprehensive school. Thus, also in this reform the normative function of teacher education was evident. A uniform structure - in line with the seminar tradition - was regarded a tool for reducing the specialization and differentiation within the comprehensive school staff - a precondition for creating an ideological homogeneity - in a wide sense - in the staff.

Formerly, the firm prescriptions were regarded a guarantee for equal standard and, therefore, external certification bodies were not necessary. Many of these prescriptions and regulations are now abandoned but they are not replaced by any external body (external examiners, certification board, inspectorate etc.) controlling the quality or equality of teacher education or the examined teachers. The criteria for what is considered good teacher education and preparation of prospective teachers are defined *within* the teacher education institutions and the practical training schools themselves.

Nowadays, it is often claimed, teacher education is left *behind* the rapid changes in schools. While schools continuously have to adjust to changes in society, teacher education has kept to - and also protected - its normative social engineering function of the 50s and 60s to be a fore-runner.

III. 3 An integrated programme but a diversified curriculum and staff

The integration of theoretical studies and practical training periods - one strong element in the seminar tradition - underlines the vocational orientation of the programme. Unfortunately, it also causes several interruptions in the theoretical studies, thus preventing the students from more in-depth and more profound "academic" studies. The academic freedom and the academic con-

text cannot be fully used - the programme is too captured in its own complex structure.

Since the very beginning of teacher education, the practical parts of the programme are highly valued by the students. They have "face validity" as they offer experiences considered to give the most functional preparation. (The subject studies are sometimes criticized by the students for being too advanced compared to the prospective teaching or - sometimes - for being almost a repetition of their former studies in upper secondary schools.) However, nowadays teacher education is expected to provide the school system with teachers prepared for elaborating their own curriculum in a decentralized school system - within a national set of goals and frames. So far, there are just few examples of local curriculum and local development activities and, actually, in this respect the practical training parts are counteracting one of the "missions" of the programme.

The two teacher education traditions represent two very different views on what are the important qualifications and obligations for teachers in comprehensive school. Over the years they have been treated as the opposites of each others. Both represent well established notions of teacher professionalism, evident today in teacher education and in comprehensive schools, thus implying that there is no consensus on *one* notion of professionalism in teacher education today (Askling 1983, Hartman 1993).

The composition of the teacher education staff has a complex - and also conflict loaded - structure. Most teachers in subject studies have their identity in academic disciplines. Teachers in educational theory and educational psychology have their points of reference in educational sociology, educational psychology, functional theory or social critical theory. These two groups of teacher educators hold academic degrees (comparable to B.A), just a few of them hold a doctor's degree. Most teachers in methodology have a double identity: they are teachers in a higher education institution - but contrary to the previous groups often without academic degrees. At the same time, as former teachers in comprehensive schools, they represent a bulk of practical professional knowledge in the staff. Many of them worked as teachers in comprehensive schools in the 70s and are strong supporters of the progressive school movement.

There is also another group of teachers that must be taken into account - the large group of supervisors. They are working as teachers in the practical training schools and exert a heavy impact on the students. They are usually selected by teachers in methodology or by their own principals as good "representatives" of progressive school teachers.

III. 4 Traditional notions of teachers' professionalism

When the concept professionalism was introduced in official documents by the government, in the end of the 80s, there was no explanation of what kind of professional competence the term was referring to and what kind of autonomy the government was ready to handle over to the profession or the individual professionals. It was open to interpretations from existing frameworks. In accordance with the two teacher education traditions. Two different frameworks can be identified.

In the 70s and 80s, teachers in comprehensive schools were encouraged to take part in school-based development activities. Important goals for the development of the schools were at that time - among other things - to support the individual child in its personal development and to pay particular attention to children with learning disabilities. The well-being of the individual was considered a main task. (By some researchers this invitation to co-operate within a framework of very explicit goals and expectations was interpreted as a step towards deprofessionalization.) A great trust was expressed by the Social Democrat government in teachers' co-operation and team work as means for improving schools in a desired direction.

Most likely, behind such proposals was a notion of teachers' competence as based on an *integration of personal and practical experiences and subject knowledge accumulated in an ongoing developmental process, individually and in co-operation with colleagues*. This competence was considered a necessary precondition for the development of the local schools. It ought to be founded on practical experiences and on situation-bound and person-dependent knowledge of how to teach and how to take care of all children. The social competence of the individual teacher for co-operation in the working units was also underlined. Flexibility, social capacity and empathy were considered important teacher qualifications.

This orientation represents a modernization and extension of the *seminar (craft model) tradition* and is founded on the teacher training programme for class teachers in grades 1-6. Points of reference are in the social welfare policy of the 50s and 60s, in the role of comprehensive school as an instrument for social changes, on a more concrete level, in the written curriculum and the work going on in comprehensive school.

There is also another notion of professionalism to take into account and that one is rooted in the grammar school tradition and in the *academic subject teacher education* tradition. Teacher competence is founded on a package of subject knowledge and of knowing what subject knowledge to transmit and how to carry out effective teaching in the subjects. From such a notion, teacher competence is formed by a *solid knowledge base, which allows teachers to have a self confidence in selecting content and methods*. The point of reference is in the academic disciplines and in the social commission of transmitting the cultural heritage of knowledge to the next generation and of building a foundation for new knowledge to be generated from.

Today in teacher education and in comprehensive schools these two notions of teacher professionalism are represented and they are both strongly maintained and defended.

III. 5 New research based notions of professionalism

In the 50s, when the "modernisation" of teacher education started, efforts were made to give teacher education - as well as schooling - a more profound scientific foundation. From being founded mainly in a philosophical tradition, a new research orientation emerged, influenced by educational psychology and expressing a belief in the positivistic R&D rationality. It aimed at giving "scientific" (apparently neutral) solutions to the methodological problems teachers were facing in the non-streamed classes in comprehensive schools. However, this research approach failed to solve the problems in the schools. Teachers in schools were disappointed and among educational researchers the interest in this school-linked problem-solving research declined.

When teacher education was brought into the higher education context, it became evident that it compared to other sectors is extremely underfunded with regard to established research facilities such as professorships, senior lectureships, doctoral studentships and, accordingly, also has a poor status within the academia. Research connections have been encouraged - and also to some extent financially supported - by the government and gradually a new kind of research and research-linked activities is emerging.

Teacher educators without doctors' degree are encouraged to take part in graduate courses. Some of them are now successfully taking their degree. The expectations on research connections also meant a challenge for many educational researchers and teachers in the departments of education and methodology. There is nowadays a growing interest in such topics as didactic, professional knowledge, reflective practice and teacher thinking, thus paving the way for new activities in teacher education and also for research into teachers knowledge and teacher professionalism.

At least two distinct research orientations are visible in this context: a didactic orientation founded on cognitive psychology (mainly focusing on the didactic What? and How? questions) and another research orientation founded in curriculum theories from the new sociology of education (mainly focusing on the Why? questions).

Despite divergent scientific foundations, both groups of researchers meet in the so called "teacher thinking" research and are incorporating the notion of "the reflective practitioner" into their respective frameworks¹⁷. Thus, another notion of professionalism is now emerging in teacher education: Professionalism ought to be founded on *practical personal theories of teaching and schooling, elaborated during systematic reflections in and on teaching*.

The theoretical foundation for the two research orientations differ considerably, but quite a number of educational researchers now meet in a concern for and an engagement in teacher education and an interest in research into teaching, teacher knowledge and teacher competence.

¹⁷ Of course, such research activities are located to the universities. The regional colleges only indirectly take part in ongoing research.

III. 6 Research as a promising bridge between the two traditions

These new research orientations - as sources for new notions of professionalism - might also contribute to a narrowing of the two teacher education traditions and their hitherto well established notions of professionalism.

In the following scheme we have brought together these four sources for notions of professionalism.

		Orientation towards	
		Society	Knowledge
The higher education context	Teacher training programmes	The seminar tradition	The subject-teacher tradition
	Educational research	Social critical theory	Cognitive psychology, didactics

Figure 1: Sources for notions of professionalism

Both research orientations (oversimplified in the scheme) offer promising research foundations for a teacher preparation aiming at developing a reflective and less normative stance towards educational issues. In addition, and not the least, research in the two orientations - and a generous exchange and co-operation between the orientations - might also offer a promising bridge between the two fairly cemented programme traditions.

Unfortunately, the research influence on mainstream teacher education is still rare, as research facilities are only available at the

universities (and not at the additional regional colleges with teacher education).

III. 7 "Agents" for defining and shaping the professionalism

As was mentioned in earlier sections, within the current training programme a variety of assumptions about teaching, schooling, teacher quality and professionalism are represented. In this variety of opinions and assumptions, the students find the practical training periods to be the most rewarding parts of the programme.

Apparently, teacher education is trusted by the students when arranging meeting points in schools with school teachers. This means that the notions of professionalism held by the supervisors and their colleges and the way these teachers carry out their teaching have impact on the teacher students. Therefore, directly and indirectly, the municipalities (and their politicians and administrators) and the teachers in the practical training schools exert a heavy influence on teacher education. From the perspective of the students the norm for good teaching is more convincingly set by teachers in comprehensive schools than by teachers in teacher education.

The successive steps towards decentralization have created a situation, where the influence from the state on comprehensive school and on higher education - including teacher education - is weak. The influence from teacher education on comprehensive school is, apparently, also weak. We dare say that the influence from teacher education on the municipal schools is weak. In fact, the influence tends to have the opposite direction - comprehensive school is exerting influence on teacher education. The municipals govern comprehensive school and comprehensive school teachers exert a heavy influence on the students in the teacher training programmes.

But is this the whole truth about the relationship between teacher education and comprehensive school? When *in-service training* is considered, the pattern of influence gets more varied and teacher educators apparently play a significant role as teachers in the in-service training courses. To some extent, but still very fragile, the same holds for *educational research*. At some universities, research

centres are now established in teacher education, inviting teacher and teacher educators to co-operate with researchers in school development work. Thus, through two other activities - in-service training and educational research - teacher education evidently contribute to the municipalities and in the developing of teachers' professionalism.

When taking into account the decentralization policy, changes in teacher education, notions of professionalism held in teacher education, and students teachers experiences in training schools, we get the following scheme of the relative influence from different "agents" on the definition of teacher professionalism, on the relationship between teacher education and government and on the role of teacher education as a tool for state steering.

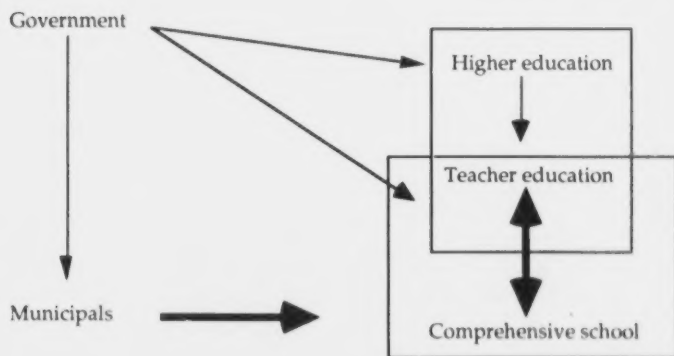


Figure 2: *The relative influence on shaping the profession*

Over the years and irrespective of political colour, Swedish governments have used teacher education as a tool for guaranteeing a national equality in comprehensive school, earlier by use of firm regulations are now by references to professionalism. However, when referring to this professionalism the government ignores the fact that there nowadays is no general agreement within teacher education on what kind of professionalism to prepare for and perhaps also concealing the fact that there are wide variations in political opinions of what kind of school to develop.

Perhaps the current references to teacher education as a tool for state steering of comprehensive schools just reflect persisting and ingrained expectations of national standards and national equality rather than an interest in promoting a professionalism to be developed (in terms of autonomy, independence, knowledge monopoly).

However, other explanations might also be possible: the use of the concept "professional" might imply that the state wants to exhort the municipalities to give resources to in-service training and development work and to encourage the teachers to take their own responsibility for their own professional development.

In addition, it might be a way of concealing that there right now is no political space for engaging teachers and their unions in a political discussion on *what* kind of professionalism to develop for *what* kind of schools.

III. 8 The Swedish case - a summary

We have identified some characteristic features of Swedish teacher education and its relation to the government, to the municipalities and to the concept professionalism - very similar to teacher education in many other countries. Teacher education

- holds contradictory notions of what is the proper way for preparing teachers
- has a weak connection to research and almost no research resources on its own
- exerts in its theoretical parts weak impact on the students than in the practical training periods.
- has a weak position within their higher education institutions
- exerts in its practical parts (located in the local community schools) a very strong impact on the students.

- has nowadays a diffuse and weakly defined mandate from the state - but still a mandate

We have also identified in the Swedish teacher education for comprehensive school teachers

- a tension between two teacher education traditions (reflecting the former compulsory school and grammar school traditions)

However, we have also identified some recent - and promising - trends that must also be taken into account when estimating the potential for Swedish teacher education to implement a "reflection in and in action" strategy and to create a more independent and autonomous teacher professionalism.

- new research orientations might contribute to a "reflection" by bridging the gap between theory and practice in teacher education and - in addition - overcoming the tension between the two traditions.

Let's now return to our introductory questions about state steering, academic freedom and professional autonomy and the potential for a reflection strategy in teacher education to - at least partly - to find a balance between governmental steering and professional independency.

IV. A DYNAMIC TEACHER EDUCATION - a source for professionalism and an indirect tool for state steering

With our Swedish case as a point of departure, we will discuss some general aspects of teacher education as a resource for shaping teacher professionalism, its role as a tool for state steering and the potential for the "reflection in and on action" strategy in teacher education to be a powerful source for developing a professionalism.

IV. 1 Strategies for improving teacher education

As has been clearly demonstrated in surveys of inquiry oriented approaches and case study methods implemented in teacher education, there is still no agreement on how teachers ought to think

about the concrete phenomena of practice and thus also no consensus in teacher education over what kind of theories, paradigms and concepts teacher candidates need to know and thus what kinds of knowledge the inquiries and cases ought to manifest (McAninch, A, 1991). According to Zeichner (1992) a thorough reflection orientation cannot be implemented in teacher education unless there is a commonly shared opinion of the usefulness in such an orientation in teacher education staff. Kennedy (1989a, 1989b, 1992) identifies many obstacles within teacher education and in the society for an implementation of the reflective practitioner approach.

Does this mean that teacher education cannot use its higher education context and its (formal) academic freedom for implementing the "reflection" approach? We don't agree. Teacher education *can* be an important resource for professionalism and school development, but perhaps more indirectly than is expected today, and not without profound structural changes in the relationship between educational research, in-service training, teacher education and municipal school development work.

We have been inspired from the debates and work carried out in the last years of researchers who like Zeichner and Kennedy (although they are well aware of the obstacles) are interested in teacher education and teacher professional development¹⁸. The efforts to use university based teacher education and departments of education in co-operation with teacher training programmes and municipality schools for school based inquiry oriented work in which researchers, teacher educators, school teachers and teacher students are, in our opinion, promising and ought to be tested in Swedish teacher education¹⁹.

A more profound *research orientation* can bring new perspectives into teacher education - however under some very clear preconditions. Teacher educators in other departments than the department of education must be engaged and offered research activities that are rewarding for them, thus eliminating that some categories

¹⁸ Among other contributors are Cochran and Lytle 1990, Day, Pope and Denicolo 1990, Fullan and Hargreaves 1992, Lacey and Merseth 1993, Sykes and Bird 1992, Tabachnick and Zeichner 1991, 1992.

¹⁹ At Linköping University, a series of research and development projects, funded by the Ministry of Education and aiming at examining strategies for such a co-operation, are accomplished by the Faculty of Education under leadership by Berit Askling, Edgar Almén and others.

of teacher educators are left outside of it and also supporting an integration of the two teacher education traditions. Teachers in comprehensive school must also be supported in their development work. Researchers must take part in school and teacher education based activities in order to be trusted by teachers and considered as rewarding collaborators. Researchers have to break the traditional expectations of being ready to deliver immediate solutions (the R&D rationale).

We agree with Sockett (1989) that researchers, teacher educators and practitioners must form a community in the pursuit of an epistemology of practice that takes into account the characteristics of the professionalism of teachers. With references to our figure 2, we argue that *research centres* can function as arenas for such communities. Instead of focusing on their own subjects and of protecting their own traditions, teacher educators can meet in new constellations in research centres. Instead of trying to design their own development work just out of their own ideas and frames of reference, teachers in comprehensive schools can get a support from researchers in these research centres.

A more profound incorporation of *in-service training* into the teacher education context can establish a more continuous and effective bridge to comprehensive schools and facilitate a more systematic exchange of experiences and knowledge between schools and teacher education.

Within teacher education, alternative tracks ought to be elaborated offering courses which are accepted as *introductory courses in the graduate programme* as a way of bridging the gap between undergraduate and graduate studies and encouraging teacher students to continue to graduate studies.

Municipalities ought to encourage teachers to return to universities after a few years of practice and enrol in *graduate studies*. In order to attract teachers, the municipals must give financial support during their study time and also, when graduated, offered qualified positions *in schools*.

IV. 2 Teacher education and the government

Our examination on teacher education in previous sections brings us to the following conclusion: the expectations put on teacher education to function as a tool for state steering by "delivering" professionals of a certain standard and with a commonly shared ideology are unrealistic and cannot be fulfilled, if by professionalism is meant a personal capacity to reflect on practice, to elaborate a personal pedagogical knowledge founded on a theoretical base of professional knowledge - in short to take a professional responsibility for developing schools.

This brings us to our concluding questions: Must teacher education keep its traditional role of guaranteeing an equivalence of standard²⁰ (as is the case in Sweden) or of preparing teachers for passing certification tests (as is the case in many US states)? We believe that this role is hampering the development of teacher education and preventing it from a creative usage of and interplay with the resources now available in the higher education context?

Probably, a more research based and "reflective" oriented programme will highlight some very delicate issues: the variation in standard will increase between the teacher training institutions, thus bringing to the fore the issue of equality and also the politically delicate issue (at least in Sweden) of the standard of the university regional colleges compared to the universities. In addition, there might be more elements of uncontrolled and unforeseen professionalism among teachers - and thus also the risk that schools will develop in unexpected and unintended directions if the professionals use their space of action.

Thus, our reliance on the potential synergy effects of bringing teacher education, educational research, school based work and in-service training into co-operation brings to the fore the issue of national equivalence in the educational system. However, our assumption is that it is better to start somewhere and do something, than just do nothing in order to avoid an injustice to some teacher education institutions and to some municipalities and their schools.

²⁰ An examination a few years ago, commissioned by the National Board of Universities and Colleges, indicated that the equality and equivalence of standards could be doubted (Askling et al 1991).

In order to allow for a variation, the local programmes (not the individual students) ought to be examined by external examiners and/or National Councils. The current concern about quality in higher education (manifested in Sweden in the recently established Swedish University Chancellor as a National Agency for quality audit and quality assessment) ought to guarantee that the variation is made public. Such evaluations have the potential for opening up for a constructive debate on what kind of professionalism is expected from the government and from the municipalities, thus reducing the normative burden put on teacher education from the social engineering tradition without having to lose all potential for governmental influence.

To conclude: we believe that the academic context and the "reflection" strategy holds the potential for supporting a professionalism among teachers, however on the assumption that teacher education can establish fruitful co-operation - on equal terms and not as a forerunner - with the local communities and their schools.

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Miljon-projektet.
Samverkan för kompetensutveckling

Miljon-projektet vill genom samverkan mellan lärarutbildning, fortbildning, forskning och skolutvecklingsarbete frigöra och vidareutveckla den kompetens som finns i var och en av dessa olika verksamheter.

Projektets huvudsyfte är att pröva olika strategier för samverkan, att systematisera erfarenheterna och kritiskt granska resultaten. Med denna inriktning kan projektet ge en praktiskt användbar kunskap om hur utvecklingsarbete inom skolans och lärarutbildningens områden kan utformas så att en kompetensutveckling främjas inom var och en av verksamheterna.

Samtidigt är det uppenbart att projektet syftar vidare än så. Den samverkan som skall främjas gäller olika pedagogiska verksamheter som alla syftar till att utveckla lärares yrkeskunskap. Att studera vad som sker när olika verksamheter möter varandra i utvecklingsarbete kan ge en ökad insikt om vad som ingår i lärares yrkeskunskap och hur den kan utvecklas.

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